

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE103-3
FOR NPS USE ONLY

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Buena Vista Land Company

AND/OR COMMON

Old Court House (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2110 Magnolia Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Buena Vista

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

(in city)

CODE

530

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

X BUILDING

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

X ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

X OTHER: Library

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Board of Trustees of the Old Court House c/o Chairman

STREET & NUMBER

2110 Magnolia Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Buena Vista

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 24416

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Buena Vista City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Buena Vista

STATE

Virginia 24416

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

1971, 1978

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on Magnolia Avenue in Buena Vista, the Old Court House is an imposing two-and-one-half-story, mansard-roof brick building, executed in five-course American bond and set on a brick foundation. The modified Second Empire style building was constructed in 1890.

The main (west) facade is comprised of a simply framed, glass-paned door surmounted by a double transom containing six lights and flanked by two four-paned sidelights. The arched doorway is covered by a pent-roof canopy, supported by knee braces, and contains a central gable. The fenestration on the first two stories consists of paired and triple-hung-sash, segmental-arched windows, the arches of which are rendered in gauged brick. The attic story contains a central tower covered by a mansard roof and flanked by pedimented dormers. The roof retains its original imbricated slate shingles, and the wrought-iron roof cresting has been removed.

The north and south elevations consist of three bays; the fenestration is identical to that found on the main (west) facade. The attic story contains three symmetrically positioned pedimented dormers, identical in appearance to those found on the main facade. The rear (east) elevation contains a small, one-story service wing, the facade of which is pierced by minimal fenestration.

The interior contains a central-hall plan, the hall being dominated by the main open-string stair. The stair is composed of factory-made components, characteristic of building practices of this period. Originally, the lower level housed the Treasurer's Office, Mayor's Office, Office of the Clerk of Court and the courtroom. Attorneys' offices and the telephone exchange were situated on the second floor. The third floor served as the local Odd Fellow Lodge. Modifications have been made to the south rooms of the first floor, presently being used as the public library. The relatively simple rooms retain their original Eastlake mantels.

RCC

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___ AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period from 1889 to 1891 witnessed a land boom in the central part of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley that contributed to the development of the area. Erected in 1890, at the height of the "boom", the Old Court House stands as a symbol of the economic and physical growth of the City of Buena Vista.

On the first day of the new year of 1891, the Richmond Dispatch reported the following observation:

Virginia has had a "boom". New towns have sprung up in fields and forests. Old ones have grown greatly. Where we used to have few cities we now have many. It is an era of development of our iron and coal lands; of the planting of new industries, and the determination to make Virginia a manufacturing state...

The Rockbridge County News in 1889 was less sedate with its observations: "To put it mildly, things are getting wild. It is not unusual for eligible building lots to jump \$100 in twenty-four hours."

The "boom" was a direct result of the construction of the Norfolk and Western Railroad that virtually opened up the abundantly rich resources of the Valley for economic and environmental consumption. The potential for development was enhanced by the discovery of substantial amounts of iron ore in the area. Supported by Northern investors and local entrepreneurs, the "boom" reached tremendous proportions before ending with the panic of 1893. Land development companies were established, and new towns were laid out, of which Buena Vista is a typical example.

Managed by A. T. Barclay, the Buena Vista Company was founded in 1889 to promote and develop Buena Vista as an industrial center. Capital stock was issued and land purchased. As early as February 1889, the company was able to announce that all of its \$600,000 capital stock had been subscribed. The company's first furnace was opened and operating by the latter part of 1890. In addition, the company operated steel works, wool and paper mills, and factories that manufactured glass, bricks, tiles and furniture.

Synonymous with the development of the industry was the growth of the town. The population grew from 400 in 1890 to over 5,000 in 1892. By that time some 600 structures including dwellings, churches, stores, and other buildings had been completed. Among the buildings constructed at this time was the main office building of the Buena Vista Company. The company directors chose the imposing Second Empire style to distinguish their building headquarters. The building style had come to characterize "boom" town headquarters throughout the United States and was ultimately derived from governmental architecture in Washington, D. C.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Old Court House, Buena Vista, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 9 & 8 PAGE 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rockbridge County News, December 12, 1889.

Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1897-98, Vol. III.
Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Company, 1898, p. 1057.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

In 1892 the Buena Vista Company sold its office building to the newly incorporated City of Buena Vista for \$10,000. During this time the "boom" had slowed down, and the need for a municipal structure was apparent.

Following the construction of a new municipal building in 1971, the Old Court House was scheduled to be razed. Through the efforts of interested citizens, the building was saved from demolition. A symbol of the city's economic and municipal growth, the building now houses the public library and Chamber of Commerce.

MTP/RCC

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Buena Vista, Virginia. New York: South Publishing Company, 1892.
Carrow, Gene. "Old Buena Vista City Hall Begins New Life at 81". Richmond Times-Dispatch,
November 8, 1971.
Morton, Oren F. A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia. Staunton: McClure Company,
Inc., 1920, pp. 153-155.
Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Vol. 6 1961-65, Lynchburg, Va. 1966,
p. 97.
(See Continuation Sheet #1)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 645020 4777430
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is situated on a rectangular lot which measures 75'x125', the 75' fronting on Magnolia Avenue.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

April 1978

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE MAY 16 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

79°22'30"

37°45'

4175000 N

1400000 E

145

145

20'

147

USGS 7.5 Quadrangle
Buena Vista, Virginia
(Scale: 1:24000)
1965 (PR 1970)

Old Courthouse, Buena Vista, Virginia

UTM Reference:
A 17/645020/4177430

